

EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Mayor Chris Cooke

DATE OF MEETING: 09 September 2026

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members on areas of activity within my portfolio including performance against strategic priorities.

- **Update:**
- We are now even closer to delivering town-wide youth provision, with nine of the ten wards that previously had no provision now having an allocated provider, thanks to the investment approved in the last budget.
- Plans for the most significant transformation of Middlesbrough town centre in a generation have been unveiled, bringing forward a range of new developments and improvements across the heart of the town.
- The Employment and Skills Hub at the Cleveland Centre is now open. Operated by Middlesbrough Community Learning, the hub offers accessible support and high-quality learning opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.
- It has been a fantastic summer of community activity, with family fun days delivered by our dedicated neighbourhood teams across the town. Residents have also joined council staff for a number of community action days, helping to keep neighbourhoods clean, safe and welcoming for all.

1. HIGHLIGHTS

Update:

1.1 Summer Savings Scheme Helps Families Enjoy Middlesbrough Attractions

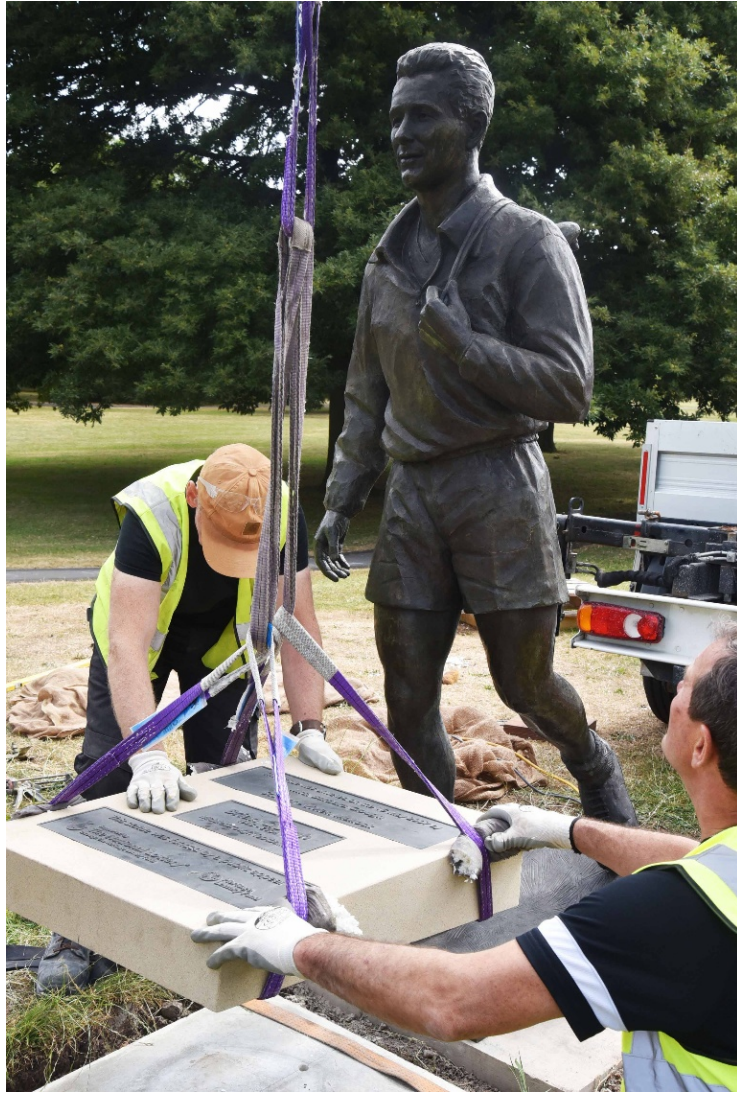
- 1.1.2** I am pleased that throughout the summer holidays, families were able to enjoy lower-cost visits to both Newham Grange Farm and the Captain Cook Birthplace Museum.
- 1.1.3** On top of the 5% VAT reduction introduced by the Government, the Council introduced even further reductions to ensure these popular venues remain affordable and accessible for local families during the school holidays.
- 1.1.4** At Newham Grange Farm, admission prices were reduced from £5.80 to £5 for adults and from £4.90 to £4 for children. The family ticket price has also been reduced from £19.50 to £15 for two adults and two children or one adult and three children.
- 1.1.5** Newham Grange Farm remains one of the town's most popular visitor attractions, offering opportunities to meet a wide range of farm animals, enjoy outdoor play areas and take part in seasonal activities. During the summer holidays, the farm

has also hosted a range of themed events and entertainment designed to attract families and encourage repeat visits.

- 1.1.6** The Captain Cook Birthplace Museum also benefited from the scheme. Family ticket prices have been reduced to £10, while adult admission has dropped to £4.20 and tickets for children and concessions have been reduced to £3.30.
- 1.1.7** The reduced admission prices have enabled greater access to the museum's exhibitions and activities, while also allowing visitors to enjoy unlimited admission until 30th August.
- 1.1.8** The school holidays can be an expensive time, and it is important that local people can continue to enjoy high-quality attractions and experiences close to home. By supporting affordable days out, we are helping more families discover everything Middlesbrough has to offer while supporting some of our most valued cultural and leisure assets.

1.2 Brian Clough Statue Returns to Albert Park Following Restoration Work

- 1.2.1** I am delighted that the much-loved Brian Clough statue has returned to its place in Albert Park following a programme of specialist restoration and strengthening works.
- 1.2.2** The sculpture created by renowned artist Vivien Mallock, was originally unveiled in 2007 and has since become a popular landmark for football fans, residents and visitors. Depicting Brian Clough walking from his Valley Road home towards Middlesbrough's former Ayresome Park ground, the statue celebrates one of the town's most famous sporting figures.
- 1.2.3** Over the years, the statue's popularity has unfortunately led to occasional damage caused by visitors climbing on or placing weight on the structure. To ensure its long-term preservation, specialist repairers undertook restoration work, including strengthening the statue and securing it within a new foundation block.
- 1.2.4** As part of the improvements, the statue has been lowered to ground level and reinstalled at its customary location near the Dorman Museum entrance to Albert Park. Additional landscaping works have also been carried out, including the creation of a new flowerbed around the base and the installation of a protective fence designed to discourage climbing while maintaining clear views of the artwork.
- 1.2.5** The return of the statue provides an opportunity to celebrate Clough's remarkable legacy and the important role he continues to play in Middlesbrough's sporting heritage. The sculpture remains a valued attraction within Albert Park and an enduring tribute to one of the greatest players and managers the game has ever seen.
- 1.2.6** I would like to thank everyone involved in the restoration project for their efforts in safeguarding this significant piece of public artwork for many years to come.



1.3 New Free Pest Control Service Launched for Middlesbrough has early success

- 1.3.1** I am pleased that the new free pest control service has been launched and has been very successful in its first few months. The service has been well utilised, with residents across the town accessing its services.
- 1.3.2** The service is available to homeowners and residents living in private rented accommodation and offers free treatment for some of the most common and harmful pests found within domestic properties, gardens and garages. These include; rats, mice, bedbugs and cockroaches.
- 1.3.3** Pest infestations can have a significant impact on people's health, wellbeing and quality of life, particularly for vulnerable residents. By removing the financial cost of treatment, the Council is helping households take swift action to address problems before they become more serious.
- 1.3.4** As part of their visits, officers will provide practical advice and guidance on hygiene, property maintenance and other preventative measures that can reduce the likelihood of future infestations. This proactive approach will support residents in maintaining healthier and safer living environments.
- 1.3.5** Residents can access the service by booking an appointment online or by telephone. Morning and afternoon appointments are available Monday to Friday, and where necessary technicians may undertake multiple visits to ensure treatments are completed effectively.
- 1.3.6** This new service demonstrates our commitment to improving public health, supporting vulnerable residents and maintaining clean, safe neighbourhoods across Middlesbrough. By providing free access to treatment and preventative advice, we are helping residents tackle pest problems quickly and effectively whilst improving quality of life for communities throughout the town.



1.4 Albert Park Receives Major Investment in Tennis Facilities and Community Safety

- 1.4.1** I am delighted to share that the tennis courts at Albert Park have reopened following a major refurbishment programme delivered through a partnership between Middlesbrough Council, the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and the LTA Tennis Foundation.
- 1.4.2** The refurbished courts will support a range of opportunities for residents to get active, including weekly Barclays Free Park Tennis sessions delivered by the Council's tennis partner, We Do Tennis. Equipment will be provided, helping remove barriers to participation and ensuring tennis is accessible to all.
- 1.4.3** In addition, I am pleased to report that Albert Park has also benefited from a significant investment in public safety through the installation of new CCTV cameras and supporting infrastructure at six locations across the park.
- 1.4.4** As part of the improvements, new CCTV columns and cameras have been installed throughout the park, while existing cameras have also been upgraded to improve coverage and effectiveness. The enhanced network is directly linked to Middlesbrough's CCTV control room, allowing incidents to be monitored and responded to quickly.
- 1.4.5** The Council's CCTV network continues to play an important role in preventing crime, supporting investigations and promoting community confidence. These latest enhancements strengthen that network further and demonstrate our ongoing commitment to creating safe, welcoming public spaces.
- 1.4.6** I would like to thank all officers and partners involved in delivering this project. Alongside the investment in the tennis courts, these improvements represent a substantial commitment to the future of Albert Park, ensuring it remains a safe, vibrant and well-used community asset for years to come.





2.THE TIME AHEAD

Update:

2.1 Turner on Tees: Bringing the Turner Prize to Communities Across Middlesbrough

- 2.1.1** I am delighted that as part of Middlesbrough hosting the Turner Prize later this year, cultural events across the town will be happening through the Turner on Tees programme. While the Turner Prize brings national and international attention to our town, this programme is focused on ensuring local communities directly benefit from the opportunities it creates.
- 2.1.2** Running through to March 2027, Turner on Tees is one of the largest cultural engagement programmes ever delivered across the Tees Valley. Its ambitions extend far beyond the exhibition itself, with a strong focus on increasing participation in arts and culture, raising aspirations and strengthening civic pride across Middlesbrough.
- 2.1.3** A major element of the programme is its work with schools and young people. More than 2,600 Middlesbrough pupils have already been engaged through assemblies, with the wider education programme expected to reach at least 17,000 participants by December. Weekly visits and outreach sessions are introducing hundreds of young people to MIMA and helping them explore creative opportunities that may previously have felt out of reach.
- 2.1.4** Through the Make Your Mark initiative, the programme is working with 16 Middlesbrough schools. Local artists are supporting pupils to create new artworks, which will be displayed at the Dorman Museum alongside works on loan from Tate, providing young people with a unique opportunity to see their creativity celebrated in a public setting.
- 2.1.5** The programme also supports young people through initiatives such as the National Saturday Club at MIMA, helping participants develop skills, confidence

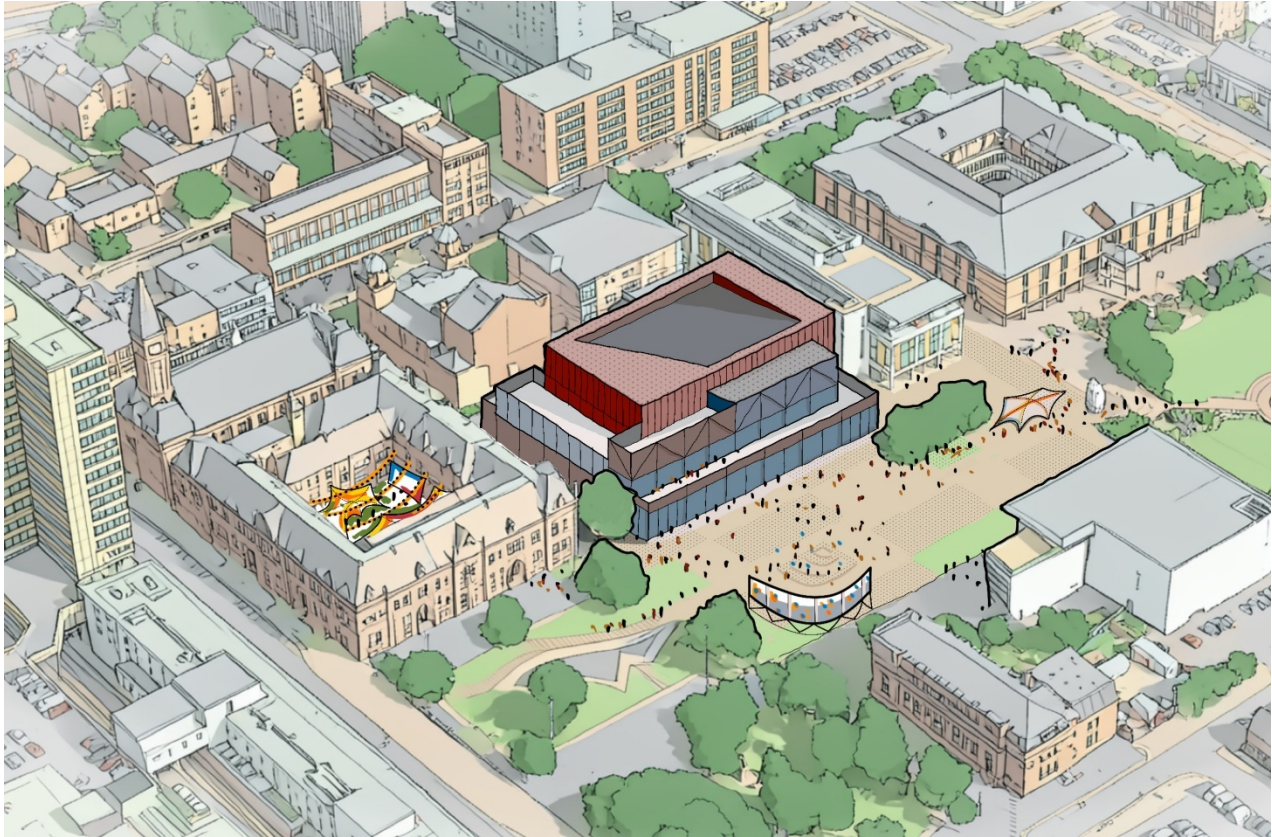
and ambition. Family-focused activities, including free creative sessions and affordable food offers, are ensuring that cultural participation remains accessible to as many residents as possible.

- 2.1.6** The true success of Turner on Tees will not be measured solely by visitor numbers, but by the lasting impact it leaves behind. If more young people feel that Middlesbrough's cultural venues belong to them, if more families experience arts and culture together, and if communities feel a stronger sense of pride in their town, then the programme will have created a meaningful and lasting legacy for Middlesbrough and future generations.

2.2 Place Strategy and Investment Prospectus Set Out Bold Vision for Middlesbrough's Future

- 2.2.1** I am pleased that Middlesbrough's new Place Strategy and Investment Prospectus has been published which together set out an ambitious long-term vision for the future of our town. Developed through the newly established Place Leaders Partnership, the strategy aims to deliver transformational change and ensure Middlesbrough remains an attractive place to live, learn, work, invest and visit.
- 2.2.2** The partnership brings together a wide range of organisations from across the public, private, education and voluntary sectors, including Middlesbrough Council, Teesside University, Middlesbrough College, Tees Valley Combined Authority, Middlesbrough Football Club, major employers, NHS organisations, Cleveland Police and the North East Chamber of Commerce. Their shared ambition is to make Middlesbrough a creative place for young people to live, learn and realise their future.
- 2.2.3** The strategy has been shaped by extensive consultation with more than 1,300 young people, parents and carers. Feedback highlighted strong pride in the town, belief in its untapped potential and the importance of creating safe, welcoming and vibrant places for residents and visitors alike.
- 2.2.4** At the heart of the vision is the continued transformation of Middlesbrough town centre, recognising the changing ways people work, shop and spend their leisure time. The proposals seek to create a more attractive, accessible and vibrant town centre that responds to modern demands while supporting economic growth and investment.
- 2.2.5** Key aspirations outlined within the Investment Prospectus include:
- Creating new urban spaces through the redevelopment of underused and end-of-life buildings
 - Developing a new theatre venue as a major cultural attraction
 - Bringing forward a new hotel development to meet growing visitor demand
 - Strengthening the town centre retail offer
 - Delivering thousands of new homes in Middlehaven and Gresham to support town centre growth and vitality
 - Improving public transport connections and passenger facilities
- 2.2.6** The strategy also places a strong emphasis on investing in neighbourhoods, supporting business growth, creating jobs in digital and innovation sectors, improving public spaces and retaining talented young people within Middlesbrough. Alongside town centre regeneration, these priorities aim to improve opportunities and quality of life across the whole town.
- 2.2.7** The publication of the Place Strategy and Investment Prospectus marks an important milestone for Middlesbrough. By bringing together partners around a

shared vision and identifying opportunities for future investment, the strategy provides a clear roadmap for how the town can build on its existing strengths and realise its full potential. I would like to thank all members of the Place Leaders Partnership, Council officers and the many residents who helped shape this ambitious vision for Middlesbrough's future.



2.3 Making Middlesbrough Thrive: A Coordinated Response to Deprivation and Inequality

- 2.3.1** Significant progress has been made in developing the Council's response to deprivation and inequality through the new Making Middlesbrough Thrive approach. Following extensive engagement with residents, local communities and elected members, priorities for investment in areas identified through the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) have now been agreed, ensuring funding is directed towards the issues that matter most to local people.
- 2.3.2** The consultation process provided valuable insight into the challenges and opportunities within some of Middlesbrough's neighbourhoods. Residents shared their experiences, highlighted local priorities and helped shape proposals that will support long-term improvement, growth and stronger communities.
- 2.3.3** This new approach which will ensure that all Council Directorates explicitly consider deprivation and inequality when developing their Service Plans. This will strengthen the link between evidence of need and service delivery, ensuring Council resources and activity are focused where they can have the greatest impact.

- 2.3.4** Under the new framework, each Directorate will identify specific commitments demonstrating how its services contribute towards reducing inequality, alleviating poverty and improving outcomes for residents. These commitments will be brought together into a single consolidated report, providing a clear picture of the Council's collective response to deprivation across the town.
- 2.3.5** The work supports the ambitions set out in the Council Plan 2026-2029 and will contribute to delivering:
- A successful and ambitious town
 - A healthy place
 - Safe and resilient communities
 - Better value through targeted and evidence-led investment
- 2.3.6** Importantly, we recognise that the challenges highlighted through the IMD cannot be addressed by local government alone. As a result, partners across the town will be engaged through the Place Leaders Partnership and wider governance arrangements to develop a coordinated, place-based response to deprivation.
- 2.3.7** This approach will bring together the commitments of key organisations across the public, private, education, health and voluntary sectors, creating a shared plan for addressing inequality and supporting communities most in need. By aligning resources and ambitions across organisations, we can maximise collective impact and deliver meaningful change for residents.
- 2.3.8** While the challenges facing Middlesbrough are significant and long-standing, this work demonstrates a clear commitment to tackling them in a coordinated and purposeful way. I would like to thank residents, ward councillors, partner organisations and Council officers for their contribution to this process, which will help ensure that future investment and activity are focused on improving outcomes and creating opportunities for those communities that need them most.